

Message Text

SECRET

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17

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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P 120923Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8909

AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

S E C R E T RANGOON 3465

EXDIS

HONG KONG PASS AMBASSADOR OSBORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, BM, US

SUBJECT: ALLEGATIONS OF USG INVOLVEMENT IN U THANT AFFAIR

REF: (A) BANGKOK 19255 (B) RANGOON 3279

1. OVER THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS, WE HAVE RECEIVED VARIOUS REPORTS THAT ELEMENTS OF THE BSPP AND THE MILITARY ARE ASSERTING THAT THE "AMERICAN EMBASSY" OR THE "CIA" HAD IN SOME FASHION PROVOKED THE U THANT AFFAIR AND PRODDED THE STUDENTS ON. THE SOURCES WERE TWO SENIOR FSL'S WHO HAVE REPORTED RELIABLY IN THE PAST. IN ONE INSTANCE, AN FSL WAS TOLD BY HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW, A BURMA ARMY OFFICER, THAT SOME OF HIS COLLEAGUES BELIEVED THE USG WAS BEHIND THE AGITATION THAT AROSE AROUND THE U THANT ISSUE. A CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER OF THE BSPP TOLD THE SAME FSL THAT AT LAST WEEKS MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE, THERE WAS SOME CORRIDOR CONVERSATION THAT THE USG WAS SUPPORTING ONE SECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. THIS THESIS WAS EMBELLISHED WITH THE ADDITIONAL ASSERTION THAT THE PRC WAS ALSO INVOLVED, SUPPORTING A DIFFERENT SECTOR. FINALLY, A UNIVERSITY STUDENT WHO WAS ENGAGED IN THE CAMPUS ACTIVITY TOLD THE OTHER FSL THAT CAMPUS LEADERS WERE CLAIMING THAT THEIR MOVEMENT HAD RECEIVED FINANCIAL AND OTHER MATERIAL SUPPORT FROM FOREIGN MISSIONS IN RANGOON, ESPECIALLY THE AMERICAN AND CHINESE.

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2. A SENIOR BURMESE POLICE OFFICIAL WHEN SPECIFICALLY QUERIED

ABOUT THESE RUMORS, STATED THAT HE HAD HEARD NONE WITHIN THE GUB. HE UNDERSTOOD, HOWEVER, THAT A UNIVERSITY STUDENT HAD CLAIMED PUBLICLY THAT THE STUDENTS RECEIVED A DONATION OF K10,000 (US \$2,000) FROM THE US EMBASSY. HE ADDED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE GUB AUTHORITIES WOULD TAKE SUCH TALES SERIOUSLY.

3. LUDICROUS AS THESE STORIES MAY SEEM, THEY ILLUSTRATE THE KIND OF THOUGHT PATTERN WHICH CHARACTERIZES SOME SENIOR MEMBERS OF REGIME: U THANT - FRIEND OF U NU - LIVES IN U.S. - BODY BROUGHT BACK FROM U.S. ON U.S. COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT - HIS BROTHER U KHANT HAS EMBOFF AND FSL FRIENDS. THUS, GIVEN THE PROCLIVITY WITHIN THE GUB TO FIND FOREIGN DEVILS AS THE CAUSE OF DOMESTIC TROUBLES, THESE TALES COULD GAIN CREDENCE AMONG SOME OFFICIALS ALTHOUGH AMONG THE GENERAL POPULACE, THEY ARE DISMISSED AS EFFORTS ON THE PART OF THE GUB TO FIND SCAPEGOATS. (THESE WHO DO BELIEVE THE STORY WILL THINK WELL OF US FOR IT.) IN VIEW OF OUR PREVIOUS INFORMATION THAT NE WIN HARBORS SUSPICIONS ABOUT USG POLICY TOWARD HIS REGIME, (REFTELS) THESE LATEST ALLEGATIONS OF US INVOLVEMENT IN AN INTERNAL CRISIS MAY FUEL HIS SUSPICIONS AND EVENTUALLY REFLECT UPON SOME ASPECT OF GUB-USG RELATIONS. LACEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, ALLEGATIONS, STATE FUNERALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974RANGOO03465
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740360-1052
From: RANGOON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741240/aaaabhwh.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 74 BANGKOK 19255, 74 RANGOON 3279
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUL 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <26 MAR 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALLEGATIONS OF USG INVOLVEMENT IN U THANT AFFAIR
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, BM, US, (U THANT)
To: STATE BANGKOK
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005